

FY 2018
SMALL NEPA PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

Please **do not leave any field BLANK**, unless it does not apply.
Submit form (Word doc) electronically to jjchynoweth@fs.fed.us by **May 8, 2018**.

(NOTE: Italicized / red comments are for reference only. You may delete them when completing form.)

Project Name	Precommercial Thinning
District name (or "Forestwide")	Salmon River RD & Palouse RD
County(ies) where project located?	Idaho and Latah
FS Personnel Name, Phone Number and Email <i>If a partnership, please add name, phone and email; however, an FS employee MUST be the project proponent and point of contact.</i>	Clare Brick 208-963-4208 cbrick@fs.fed.us
Legal Location <i>Township(s), Range(s), and Section(s) of project.</i>	Multiple stand locations within the Salmon River and Palouse Ranger Districts (see list of stands at the end of this document with legal locations)
District Ranger / Line Officer's Name <i>Person(s) responsible for signing the decision document</i>	Jeff Shinn and Stefani Spencer
Is the project associated with meeting a Forest target?	Yes (integrated fuels target)
Which CE Category does this project fit? <i>Provide citation: 36CFR 220.6(d)(x) or 36 CFR 220.6(e)(x)</i> <i>O:\NFS\NezPerceClearwater\Project\MultiBasin\Planning\Small_NEPA_Cat_Ex\Reference Material\CE Categories</i>	36 CFR 220.6(e)(6)

For projects that fit a 36 CFR 220.6 (d)(x) category a Project Record or written Decision are not required:

IF submitting under 36 CFR 220.6(d), does the Decision Maker want the project to go through the Small NEPA process*? Y___ N___

If no, this form does not need to be submitted to the Small NEPA planner.

If yes, fill out the remainder of the form and have Decision Maker submit it to Small NEPA planner.

* **NOTE:** ALL 36 CFR 220.6(e) projects go through the Small NEPA process.

For projects submitted under a 36 CFR 220.6(e) category, or are being submitted for Small NEPA under a 36 CFR 220.6 (d) category (see above), at what level does the Decision Maker want the project scoped?

Internal___ External X_

Internal scoping will be through the Small NEPA IDT, unless otherwise specified. Scoping would be documented in the Extraordinary Circumstances Checklist.

External scoping will be with the public via a scoping letter, a legal notice, the scoping letter posted on the NPCWNF website, and postcards with a link to the website/scoping letter. The scoping letter/postcards will be mailed to the full NEPA mailing list unless otherwise specified.

What Level of Analysis (see below) does the Decision Maker want for the Project?

X___ **Low level:** If the project's level of public scrutiny is projected to be relatively low or unknown, the line officer chooses who we would contact for scoping (limited). In this case specialists would only do the checklist for each project. Documentation for low level analysis projects would be a completed checklist filled out by the specialists, including the name of the specialist who performed the analysis, the project name, and date it was completed. No other written documentation would be generated.

___ **Moderate level:** If the project's level of public scrutiny is projected to be relatively moderate to high, then the line officer chooses who we would contact for scoping (a little more broad). In this case, specialists would complete the checklist with the only write up being for items that are present and the rationale for the effects call. No write up would be given for items in the checklist that are not present. If the determination is no effect (which generally speaking, most CE's should have zero to very little adverse effects), then document why that determination was made in one paragraph or less. If the determination is an adverse effect, then why that determination was made would be written in less an three paragraphs.

List the Management Area(s) in which your project is located.

Salmon River RD – 12, 15, 17 and 19 Management Areas

Palouse RD - E1 Management Area

See O:\NFS\NezPerceClearwater\Project\MultiBasin\Planning\Small_NEPA_Cat_Ex\Reference Material\Management Areas

What are the desired conditions for the Management Area(s) relevant to your project?

Management Area 12 Goals: Manage for timber production and other multiple uses on a sustained yield basis while meeting visual quality objectives of retention or partial retention. Use primarily even-aged silviculture systems. Thin planted or natural regeneration to reach desired stocking levels by age 20.

Management Area 15: Manage for timber production and other multiple uses on a sustained yield basis while improving the quality of deer and elk winter range. Use primarily even-aged silviculture systems. Thin planted or natural regeneration to reach desired stocking levels by age 20.

Management Area 17: Manage for timber production and other multiple uses on a sustained yield basis while meeting visual quality objectives of retention or partial retention.

Management Area 19: Manage for livestock forage production and other multiple uses on a sustained yield basis.

Management Area E1 Goals: Provide optimum, sustained production of wood products. Timber production is to be cost effective and provide adequate protection of soil and water quality. Manage viable elk populations within areas of historic elk use based on physiological and ecological needs. Manage a range of water quality and fish habitat potential from high fishable in several of the key anadromous and resident fish streams to a low fishable in the Palouse District and portions of the Pierce District.

Desired conditions are described in Chapters 2 & 3 of the Nez Perce and Clearwater Forest Plans. List those that apply.

Is the project in a Roadless Area? Yes* No

If yes, which one?

** If yes, answer the questions in the 'Project in Roadless Area' table below, **AND** complete a Briefing Paper - note map requirements. Provide the completed Briefing Paper to Environmental Coordinator and Brian Riggers prior to scoping.*

(For Briefing Paper Info and Template see O:\NFS\NezPerceClearwater\Project\MultiBasin\Planning\Small_NEPA_Cat_Ex\Reference Material\Roadless Rule Info\General Roadless Info.)

Is the project in a congressionally designated area, ex. Wilderness, Wild & Scenic River Corridor, Research Natural Area, Historic Trail, etc.? Yes* No

If yes, which one(s)?

** If yes, contact Carol Hennessey, cahennessey@fs.fed.us, 935-4270, BEFORE submitting this proposal, to discuss how the project may affect the designated area.*

1987 Forest Plan maps are found at O:\NFS\NezPerceClearwater\Project\MultiBasin\Planning\Small_NEPA_Cat_Ex\Reference Material\Management Areas

Does the project involve road construction, reconstruction, temporary roads, or haul routes?

~~Yes~~* No

** If yes, answer the questions in the 'Project Involving Road Construction, Reconstruction, Temporary Roads, or Haul Routes' table below.*

Are there Floodplains or Wetlands in the project area? Yes No **Unknown**

Are Municipal Watersheds located in the project area? ~~Yes~~ No

If yes, which one?

Is the project located in an RHCA? ~~Yes~~ No

Is the project in the Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area? ~~Yes~~ No

Describe the existing condition of the project area.

These previously harvested stands are overstocked with seedling and sapling sized conifer tree species. Stocking levels range from approximately 800 to over 4000 stems per acre. Less desirable species like Douglas-fir, grand-fir and lodgepole pine produce cones and seeds at more regular intervals and at higher numbers than more desirable species like western larch, western white pine and ponderosa pine. This leads to overstocking of the less desirable species. High tree densities increase competition for available resources and reduce tree growth. Species such as Douglas-fir and grand fir are more susceptible to root disease and stem decay. The stands have a component of damaged, diseased, defective and suppressed trees which result in stands with overall poor health, vigor and structure.

What is the Purpose and Need for the proposed action*?

This project would thin trees in stands that have been identified as overstocked with conifer seedlings and saplings. These treatments would occur in young forest stands which have resulted from regeneration harvests in the last 15 to 25 years. Conifer trees at this stage are fairly well established and have developed enough to indicate which trees are the most dominant and most desirable. The size of the trees that are cut down will be smaller if the thinning occurs at this age and size. This will reduce the amount of thinning slash left on the ground; smaller sized slash and smaller amounts of slash will break down faster so the fire hazard is reduced more quickly

The objective of the treatment is to reduce stand density and to concentrate growth on the more desirable trees. This would also improve the overall health, structure and vigor of the stand by removing undesirable trees and retaining the dominant and codominant trees of the best quality. The species composition of the target stands would shift to a greater component of species such as western white pine, western larch and ponderosa pine which are more resistant to root disease and stem decay. Western larch and ponderosa pine are also more fire-tolerant.

This project would also have the following benefits:

- Accelerate the diameter and height growth on the remaining selected trees in order to increase future timber yield potential and to accelerate successional development to the larger size classes.
- Improve the vigor of the remaining trees to make them more resistant to insect and disease attacks and less vulnerable to ice and snow damage and thereby promote long-term forest health and resiliency.
- Maintain and promote shade intolerant species. The shade intolerant seral species generally tend to be more fire resistant and longer-lived than the shade tolerant species.
- Increase the amount of sunlight to the ground and sustain the diversity of early seral vegetation species including those browse species important to big game and to also lengthen the time period that this forage would otherwise be available.
- Reduce the long-term fire hazard conditions in the stands to be treated and to the adjacent forest stands by:
 - By reducing the ladder fuel hazard and the potential fuel buildup from future stem exclusion tree mortality.
 - By creating a break in the continuity of standing dense ladder fuels across the landscape.

** The purpose and need describes: Why the action is being proposed at this location and at this time (the need) and the desired objectives/outcomes of the action (the purpose).*

Describe the Proposed Action.

What is provided will be used in the Scoping Letter, by the resource specialists for their effects analyses, and in the Decision document so be thorough, detailed, and descriptive. Please include all project-related activities that may have an impact on the environment.

This project would thin trees on approximately 265 acres in various stands throughout the Salmon River Ranger District and on approximately 112 acres in four stands on the Palouse Ranger District. The work will be completed primarily by contract crews under the oversight of Forest Service personnel. Some tree thinning will be completed by Forest Service personnel. All work would be done by hand using chainsaws; no mechanical equipment will be used.

The majority of the trees to be cut will be less than 6 inches in diameter. Trees that are cut down maybe cut into smaller lengths or have branches cut off so the slash will be closer to the ground which will help the slash to break down faster.

The spacing of the trees left from the thinning treatment will vary from stand to stand. The species of trees selected to leave would favor western white pine, western larch and ponderosa pine. The thinning spacing and the tree species to leave will be determined by the site conditions of each stand. The prescribed spacing will be an average and the spacing between trees will vary so the leave trees will be selected to meet the objectives of each prescription.

There will be no ground disturbing activities associated with this project. No burning would occur in the stands after thinning nor would any further mechanical slash treatment be done.

Only existing roads would be used to provide access to the sites. All trees that are felled across any Forest road or trail would be removed. The project does not change access restrictions.

The estimated timeframe for the thinning treatments is from 2019 to 2023. Thinning work occurs during the year from approximately May to October and the work could occur throughout this timeframe.

List the Design Criteria and Mitigation Measures to be included in the Decision Memo.

Mitigation Measures: It is assumed there are no significant effects that need to be mitigated.

Additional Design Criteria/Measures can be listed under "Additional Information" on the last page of this form

List the Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be included in the Decision Memo. Please don't just provide the reference numbers.

- No roads or landings will be constructed.
- No mechanical equipment will be used for thinning activities.
- Use of motorized equipment (such as All-Terrain Vehicles), other than hand held equipment such as power saws, will not be permitted off designated roads in the project areas. (FSH 2509.25 – WATERSHED CONSERVATION PRACTICES HANDBOOK, CHAPTER 10, 12.4-Management Measure (6) 1.a and b.)
- If directional felling can be safely performed, trees will be felled toward the stream channel or water feature.
- Felled trees will not be removed from the project areas, helping to maintain or improve long-term levels of organic matter and nutrients. (FSH 2509.25 – WATERSHED CONSERVATION PRACTICES HANDBOOK, CHAPTER 10, 12.5 -Management Measure (7) 1.c (1)(c) and 14.2-Management Measure (14)
- No storage of fuel or fueling of chainsaws in RHCAs.
- The Forest Culturist will work with the wildlife resource specialist to evaluate lynx and harlequin duck habitat overlap with the proposed thinning stands. Any restrictions or recommendations by the wildlife specialist will be followed.

At a minimum, consider appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and weed management.

Additional BMPs can be listed under "Additional Information" on the last page of this form.

Source documents for approved BMPs can be found at – O: NFS\NezPerceClearwater\Project\MultiBasin\ Planning\ Small_NEPA_Cat_Ex\Reference Material\BMPs

Provide a list of the individuals, groups, agencies, etc.* who will be included for Scoping (external scoping only), including their mailing address and/or email address. DO NOT provide just a name.

NOTE: If no one is listed here, then only the Tribes will be scoped.

Lewis-Clark ATV Club
PO Box 9241
Moscow ID 83843

Friends of the Clearwater
PO Box 2021
Lewiston ID 83501

Brad Smith
North Idaho Director
Idaho Conservation League
PO Box 2308
Sandpoint ID 83864

Jonathan Oppenheimer
Government Relations Director
Idaho Conservation League
PO Box 844
Boise ID 83701

** The Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene Tribal governments will be contacted.*

Please attach to your project submission email, separate from this form, a GIS-generated map or maps of the project area (pdf format only) per the instructions outlined below. Please make sure that the layers can be turned on/off on your PDF map(s).

The Map(s) need fit on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.

At least one map, with (preferably) a “portrait” orientation, showing the project location/activities as points, e.g. culvert, mineral exploration site, etc.; lines, e.g. fence, road, creek, etc.; and/or the project boundary as a polygon, e.g. stand, treatment area, etc. Do not use a point when treating an area, use a polygon.

The map(s) needs to include identifying features, such as towns, roads, trails, rivers/streams, geophysical landmarks, etc. to identify where the project is on the landscape.

Please use the Forest Visitor Map as your map’s base layer (see below*). This will standardize the appearance of the maps for scoping. Please do not add contour lines to the map unless needed. Contour lines make the map difficult to read. A topo map may be used as a substitute for the FV Map, as long as there are sufficient identifying features on the base layer that can be used to identify the project’s location. If contour lines are not important to defining the location they should be turned off.

The preferred (not required) scale is 1:24000. If the project area can’t be adequately shown at 1:24K, use a larger scale (> 1:24K) showing the entire project area and if needed, provide additional maps showing details of the project activities. **Please make as few maps as possible.** Conversely, if the 1:24K scale is too large (i.e. the project / action area is a tiny point or a thin line hard to find on a large landscape), use a smaller scale (< 1:24K) to provide more detail while ensuring that the project area’s/activities’ location is identifiable.

All maps should include, at a minimum, a **Title** (include only the district and the project name); a **Legend** with the project feature(s) clearly labeled, e.g. culvert replacement, fence line, x treatment area, etc.; a **Scale** in miles (not km) using full miles, such as 0_0.25_0.5_1.0 miles (ending with 0.5 miles okay); and a **North Arrow**. Please use a black outlined box with a white background (not gray) to display them.

The map(s) are used in the scoping letter (and DM) to show, as clearly and efficiently as possible, what activity or activities are being proposed and where the activity or activities are located on the Forest.

** The Small NEPA geodatabase contains feature classes, including the Forest Visitor Map, that can be used for map creation. The geodatabase is found at:*

T:\FS\NFS\NezPerceClearwater\Project\MultiBasin\Planning\Small_NEPA_Cat_Ex\GIS\SmallNEPA.gdb

If you need help with accessing and/or working with the geodatabase in GIS, contact your Zone GIS Specialist (first) or you can contact Jim Lutes at jamesrlutes@fs.fed.us; 963-4202.

SHAPEFILES

The resource specialists require the shapefile(s) of the project’s proposed activity(ies) before they will begin their analyses. The Project Proponent needs to send the shapefile(s)* to the Small NEPA Planner (jjchynoweth@fs.fed.us) by the time the District Ranger submits this form.

*The shapefile(s) need to be labeled with the Project Name and Feature.

* The shapefile(s) should include the following extensions – .dbf, .prj, .sbn, .shp, .shx, and .xml.

*A location where the shapefile(s) can be found (ex., T drive) does not meet this obligation.

***The shapefile(s) do not substitute** for providing a map.

Small NEPA IDT/resource specialists are listed below. Contact them if you have any questions regarding their resource and your project.

Botany – Mike Hays, mhays01@fs.fed.us; 983-4028
 Fisheries – Derrick Bawdon, dbawdon@fs.fed.us; 963-4211
 Heritage – Steve Lucas, slucas@fs.fed.us; 983-4040
 Hydrology – Cynthia Valle, cvalle@fs.fed.us; 963-4203
 Minerals – Marty Jones, martinjones@fs.fed.us; 983-5158
 Recreation – Carol Hennessey, cahennessey@fs.fed.us; 935-4270
 Soils – Robert Bergstrom, robertbergstrom@fs.fed.us; 963-4287
 Wildlife – Jim Lutes, jameslutes@fs.fed.us; 963-4202

Projects in Roadless Area (N/A)

<p>What is the Roadless Area name?</p> <p><i>O:\NFS\NezPerceClearwater\Project\MultiBasin\Planning\ Small_NEPA_Cat_Ex\Reference Material\Roadless Rule Info</i></p>	<p><u>Idaho Roadless Area (IRA) Name:</u></p> <p><u>Forest Plan IRA Name (if different):</u></p>
<p>Identify the Idaho Roadless Management classification (permitted activities vary by classification).</p> <p><i>Classifications include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wild Land Recreation</i> • <i>Special Areas of Historic or Tribal Significance</i> • <i>Primitive</i> • <i>Backcountry Restoration</i> • <i>General Forest, Rangeland and Grassland</i> 	<p>Classification:</p>
<p>Does the project involve constructing or reconstructing roads? Yes* No</p> <p><i>* If yes, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2 then navigate to Subpart C 294.23</i></p>	
<p>Does the project involve cutting trees? Yes* No</p> <p><i>* If yes, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2 then navigate to Subpart C 294.24</i></p>	
<p>Does the project involve removing minerals, including common variety minerals? Yes* No</p> <p><i>* If yes, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2 then navigate to Subpart C 294.25</i></p>	

Projects Involving Road Construction, Reconstruction, Temporary Roads, and/or Haul Routes (N/A)

Note: Specialists will address items 9-11 (*in italics*) below.

ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS	YES / NO	MITIGATION MEASURE/COMMENTS
1. Will road construction or reconstruction be required? Type of road and length.		
2. Will temporary roads be needed?		
3. Will road maintenance be needed? Who will perform?		
4. Will there be a change to the current road restrictions?		
5. Are haul roads part of an established snowmobile network?		
6. Are there public safety concerns for roads, trails, or other road improvements?		
7. Are there other improvements which will require protection?		
8. Does the area currently meet Forest Plan standards for soils?		
<i>9. Will the project impact elk security?</i>		
<i>10. Will the project or log haul impact winter range?</i>		
<i>11. Will the project impact critical elk summer range?</i>		

JC : 01/10/2018

Additional Information:

Pre-commercial Thinning - Salmon River Ranger District

SUID No.	Acres	Township	Range	Section	County
011701A030100100	36	25N	1E	17	Idaho
011701A030300025	27	25N	1E	7	Idaho
011701A030300102	29	25N	1W	2	Idaho
011701A030500103	38	25N	1W	1	Idaho
011701A030600100	14	26N	1E	19	Idaho
011701A030700021	18	26N	1E	20	Idaho
011701A030700022	25	26N	1E	18	Idaho
011701A030700055	11	26N	1E	18	Idaho
011701A030700056	9	26N	1E	19	Idaho
011701A030700101	8	26N	1E	19	Idaho
011701A030700102	7	26N	1E	20	Idaho
011701A180300021	21	25N	3E	28	Idaho
011701A180400003	22	25N	3E	33	Idaho
	265				

Pre-commercial Thinning - Palouse Ranger District

Area No.	SUID No.	Acres	Township	Range	Section	County
1	010502A550300062	13	43N	2W	32	Latah
1	010502A550300063	21	43N	2W	32	Latah
2	010502A590400049	69	42N	2W	10,15	Latah
3	010502A640300019	9	40N	1W	4	Latah
		112				